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WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING
OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL
COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

St. HELENA

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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ST. HELENA 1/

I. GENERAL

1. The Territory of St. Helena, which is administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, consists of the main island of St. Helena and two dependencies: the island of Ascension and a group of islands forming the dependency of Tristan da Cunha.

2. Situated in the South Atlantic Ocean, approximately 1,900 kilometres from Angola and 2,900 kilometres from Brazil, the Territory covers a total land area of 412 square kilometres. Ascension lies 1,200 kilometres to the north-west of St. Helena, and Tristan da Cunha and the other small islands forming that dependency are approximately 2,400 kilometres to the south of it. St. Helena, where Jamestown, the capital of the Territory, is located, is the largest island, with an area of 122 square kilometres. It has a tropical climate tempered by trade winds which blow throughout the year.

3. According to the information provided by the administering Power, the population of St. Helena, excluding its dependencies, was 5,662 at the end of 1994. Approximately one third is resident at Jamestown. The next largest communities are situated at Longwood, in the east of the island, and at Half Tree Hollow, in the north-west. The remainder of the population live in small cottage communities or single cottages.

II. CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

4. Information on constitutional and political developments in St. Helena is contained in the previous working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2021, paras. 4-9).

III. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

A. General

5. St. Helena possesses few natural resources. Agriculture, largely of a subsistence nature, is the main economic activity in St. Helena. Food production is insufficient to supply the island's needs, and this, together with the lack of manufacturing industries, results in the importation of the vast majority of its requirements. The cost of living in St. Helena is higher than in the United Kingdom. The retail price index in February 1995 was 100.66, compared with 100 in November 1987. There is no value added tax.

B. Public finance

6. The main items of estimated revenue, including the British Government grant-in-aid, and expenditure for 1993-1995 were as follows:

(Thousands of St. Helena pounds) a/

Revenue	1993/94	1994/95
Direct taxes	673.6	716.8
Indirect taxes	1 061.7	1 088.4
Fines, fees and charges	212.4	207.3
Government rents and hires	132.8	112.9
Earnings of the Government	204.7	196.5
Treasury receipts	1 784.2	1 305.2
Other	3 289.7	2 604.2
Total ordinary revenue	7 359.1	6 231.3
Grant-in-aid	3 495.0	3 225.0
Total	10 854.1	9 456.3
Expenditure		
Government	1 173.3	1 364.9
Finance and development	852.4	804.4
Pensions and gratuities	347.4	314.8
Public education	826.9	1 105.5
Public health	1 154.7	1 360.9
Social services	1 044.8	1 125.3
Agriculture and forestry	827.2	793.3
Public works	3 870.3	2 903.1
Other	39.2	41.4
Total	10 136.2	9 813.6

a/ The local currency is the St. Helena pound, which is equivalent to the United Kingdom pound sterling. St. Helena currency notes, introduced in 1976, and the United Kingdom pound sterling are legal tender. The currency in the present working paper is presented in St. Helena pounds.

7. Information on taxes is contained in the previous working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2021, para. 12).

8. The Territory's statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 March 1995 was as follows:

(St. Helena pounds)

Liabilities		Assets	
Deposits	2 112 265	Cash held locally by Ascension and Crown Agents, London	3 884 218
Special funds:			
Savings bank	8 121 440	Savings bank	6 867 245
Other funds	726 238	Other funds	226 190
Consolidated Fund	2 021 511	Development Fund	- 153 657
		Advances	922 899
		Trading account	1 234 560
Total	12 981 455		12 981 455

C. Development projects

9. Information on development projects in St. Helena, including the project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is contained in the previous working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2021, paras. 14-18).

10. Apart from UNDP, the only other important donor is the European Union. The European Development Fund financed the reconstruction and rehabilitation of sea defence walls in both James' and Rupert's Bays. The project was completed in 1995 at a cost of £0.7 million. Another development aid project aimed to improve the disposal of waste water on the island was completed in 1995.

11. To encourage private sector commercial development on the island, the Government of St. Helena established the Development Agency in April 1995 and introduced tax concessions favouring export-oriented businesses.

Estimated development aid expenditure, 1993-1995
(Thousands of St. Helena pounds)

Projects	Approved total grant		Expenditure	
	1993/94	1994/95	1993/94	1994/95
Agriculture and forestry	1 452.7	1 452.7	106.2	191.1
Public utilities	3 937.4	3 875.4	662.3	502.9
Fisheries	283.3	283.3	-	200.0
Social and administrative services	4 198.6	4 935.0	122.7	252.0
Administrative and miscellaneous services	50.0	50.0	21.6	50.0
Other	190.0	40.0	163.9	-
Total	10 112.0	10 636.4	1 076.7	1 196.0

D. Agriculture, land tenure and livestock

12. Information on agriculture, land tenure and livestock is provided in the previous working paper (A/AC.109/2021, paras. 19-28).

E. Fisheries

13. Information on fisheries is contained in the previous working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2021, paras. 29-33).

14. Employment within the St. Helena Fisheries Corporation during 1994/95 consisted of 17 workers, excluding fishermen.

15. A Directorate of Fisheries was established in order to carry out government duties and responsibilities in the fisheries sector and to administer offshore licensing operations.

16. Local fish sales and export statistics are as follows:

Year	Local sales		Exports	
	Tons	Value (pounds sterling)	Tons	Value (pounds sterling)
1987/88	117.71	110 670	77.12	78 120
1988/89	116.98	115 805	92.46	88 057
1989/90	109.80	121 522	154.54	128 124
1990/91	83.21	108 406	154.53	128 124
1991/92	88.91	118 782	26.66	38 399
1992/93	69.66	108 364	87.06	115 056
1993/94	68.93	107 516	168.85	189 593
1994/95	70.73	108 950	150.35	178 447

17. The St. Helena Fisheries Corporation continued to explore export possibilities. A development project recently completed with official development assistance (ODA) has improved the overall quality of fish through better handling techniques.

F. Industries

18. There is no large-scale industry on St. Helena. All crafts are practised on a cottage-industry basis, with technical, financial and marketing facilities provided by the Government through the St. Helena Development Agency established in 1995.

G. Transport, communications and utilities

19. Information on transport, communications and utilities is contained in the previous working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2021, paras. 35-37).

20. During 1994/95, a total of 347,597 cubic metres of treated and untreated water were supplied for domestic, commercial and agricultural purposes. An ODA-financed project to supply ground water to the Hutts Gate treatment plant was partially completed in 1995.

21. Electricity for the Territory is supplied by the Energy Division of the Public Works and Services Department. A total of 5,867,937 kilowatt-hours were generated in 1994/95. Electricity is generated by the Rupert's Valley power station, which has a total capacity of 2.712 MW. Fuel is imported in bulk and

pumped ashore. In 1994/95 1,549,337 litres of fuel were consumed. There are 72 kilometres of high-voltage line carrying electricity to most of the Territory, and 112 distribution transformers are connected en route.

H. Banking and credit

22. Information on banking and credit is contained in the previous working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2021, paras. 38 and 39). Local currency in circulation as at 31 March 1995 was £3,166,867, comprising £2,793,967 in notes and £372,900 in coins.

I. International trade

23. St. Helena's main imports are food products and tobacco, motor spirits and fuel oil, animal feed, building materials, motor vehicles, machinery and spare parts. Its only exports are fish and handicrafts. Its main trading partners remain the United Kingdom and South Africa. Others include Brazil and Ascension.

IV. SOCIAL CONDITIONS

24. Information on social conditions in the Territory is contained in the previous working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2021, paras. 41-53).

25. According to the administering Power, 530 St. Helenians were employed as of March 1995 on Ascension, 218 on the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and 25 in the United Kingdom, for tours of one to two years. At the end of March 1995, there were 122 persons of both sexes under 60 years of age employed to do community work. Seasonal employment is provided for between 20 and 30 women in fish processing by the St. Helena Fisheries Corporation and St. Helena Canneries.

26. In 1994/95, average weekly rates of pay were £43.20 for government agricultural and general labourers and £47.62 for commercially hired labourers in the same category; £45.35 for government skilled labourers and £54.37 for skilled labourers in the commercial sector; and £23.30 for government and commercial sector apprentices.

27. According to the administering Power, recurrent public health expenditure in 1994/95 was £1,333,416.

28. The annual budgetary provision for 1994/95 for social security and welfare was £1,077,469.

29. At the end of March 1995, 455 needy persons received income-related benefit payments in the form of cash issues varying from £18.95 to £37.40 per week. A home help scheme was launched in 1981, and at the end of March 1995 employed 65 women. In addition, an unemployment allowance varying from £12.50 upwards is payable.

30. There are 12 schools in the Territory. The number of teachers in 1995 was 116, 3 of whom were St. Helenians. In 1994/95, school enrolment totalled 1,107 (1,086 indigenous). Total expenditure on education in 1994/95 was £1,125,653.

V. DEPENDENCIES OF St. HELENA

A. Tristan da Cunha 1/

1. General

31. General information on geographic features and climate of Tristan da Cunha is contained in a previous working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/1105, paras. 44-46). As at 30 June 1995, the indigenous population of Tristan da Cunha, mainly of mixed descent, was 292.

2. Constitutional and political developments

32. The Administrator of Tristan da Cunha is appointed by the Governor of St. Helena and advised by the Island Council, which consists of eight elected and three appointed members. The Island Council has committees on agriculture and natural resources, the Community Hall, public health and works, education and social welfare, management of the Island Store, museum and handicrafts and postal stamp policy.

33. Elections to the Island Council are held every three years. One or more of the electoral members is required to be a woman. All registered voters over 18 years of age are eligible to vote. The last general elections took place on 24 November 1994.

3. Economic conditions

34. According to the administering Power, Tristan da Cunha is essentially economically independent. It remains in a favourable financial position, with reserves equal to three times the normal recurrent annual expenditure. The administering Power provides overseas training awards and technical cooperation personnel.

35. The main industry of the island is crayfishing, a primary source of employment for the population. The sale of postage stamps and other philatelic items, which are much sought after by philatelists, is the island's second source of income.

36. The 1994/95 budget estimates revenue at £419,443 and expenditure at £633,396. The main sources of revenue were fishing royalties, the sale of stamps and philatelic material and the sale of handicrafts. Another source of revenue is interest on investments held by the administering Power. There is no taxation apart from a nominal 65 pence per year paid by all males between 18 and 65 years of age, and a levy on imported alcoholic drinks and cigarettes, which is used to subsidize essential foodstuffs. As of 30 June 1995, deposits at the

local Post Office Savings Bank amounted to £229,845, compared with £91,383 in June 1991, the latest date this information was available.

4. Social conditions

37. According to the administering Power, the standard of living has shown an enormous improvement in recent years. There is full employment for males and work is available for most women. The Government and the fishing company grant wage increases based on the cost-of-living index calculated twice annually from the data submitted to the ODA Statistics Division in London. During the year under review, 24 islanders took advantage of government loans to build or improve their houses. Pensions are paid to all persons over 65 years of age. There is a government pension scheme to which employees contribute 4.25 per cent of their earnings up to a specified maximum; employers contribute an equivalent amount.

38. Medical care is provided free of charge by the Government. The island's only hospital is staffed by a qualified expatriate medical officer and four nurses, and is equipped with basic medical equipment. The principal illnesses are asthma, hypertension, musculoskeletal disorders and epidemic viral illnesses. When required, medical treatment is provided overseas. The medical budget for 1995/96 is approximately £100,000, compared with £47,475 in 1991/92.

39. Education is free and compulsory for all children between 5 and 15 years of age. Enrolment as of June 1993 (excluding pre-school) was 30 pupils, with 9 assistant teachers (including 2 pre-school). Working men and women are encouraged to continue their education under a "day-release" programme. The school's current requirements for recurrent expenditure in 1994/95 were approved at £30,699, compared with £22,000 in 1991/92.

B. Ascension

40. Information on the island of Ascension for the period ending 1988 is contained in a previous working paper on St. Helena prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/1071). No further information has been received by the Secretariat since that time.

VI. FUTURE STATUS OF THE TERRITORY

Consideration by the General Assembly

41. In his statement before the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) on 11 October 1995, 2/ during the general debate on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that, as the holder of 10 dependent Territories, the United Kingdom remained firmly committed to the principle of self-determination and continued to take very seriously its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations to develop self-government in its dependent Territories. Within the constraints of treaty

obligations, it remained firmly committed to ensuring, in cooperation with the locally elected Governments, that their constitutional framework continued to meet the interests and wishes of their peoples. His Government also took seriously its obligations regarding the economic needs of the dependent Territories.

42. At the 15th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, on 3 December 1995, in the explanation of vote after the vote on the draft resolution on 12 Territories, including St. Helena, 3/ the representative of the United Kingdom said 4/ that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution because key amendments put forward by the United States of America and the United Kingdom had not been accepted, despite the fact that they had aimed at making the language of the draft resolution more appropriate for those most closely affected. It was for the elected representatives in Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Pitcairn and St. Helena to decide whether and at what time to consult their electorates on a change in their constitutional relationship with the United Kingdom. Indeed, the Governor of St. Helena had informed the island's Legislative Council that he would be happy to enter into debate on a constitutional review. Ways were being sought of bringing the matter forward.

43. On 6 December 1995, the General Assembly adopted, by a recorded vote of 130 to 4 with 26 abstentions, resolution 50/39 entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples". In the explanation of vote after the vote, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the draft resolutions submitted to the General Assembly did nothing to advance the wishes and interests of the indigenous people of the remaining dependent Territories, which remained the foundation of the British Government's policies. More generally, his delegation recognized that the United Nations had a positive and cherished record in the area of decolonization, achieved during its first 50 years, and that the principles upheld by this Organization had an enduring validity. He paid tribute to those who had worked successfully and with good will in that field, and said that his country would continue to fulfil its obligations with regard to the situation in the United Kingdom's dependent Territories. 5/

Notes

1/ Information regarding St. Helena and Tristan da Cunha has been derived from reports transmitted to the Secretary-General by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations on 17 October 1995.

2/ A/C.4/50/SR.6, paras. 30-32.

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 23 (A/50/23), chap. X, para. 25; adopted subsequently by the General Assembly as resolution 50/38.

4/ A/C.4/50/SR.15, para. 138.

5/ A/50/PV.82